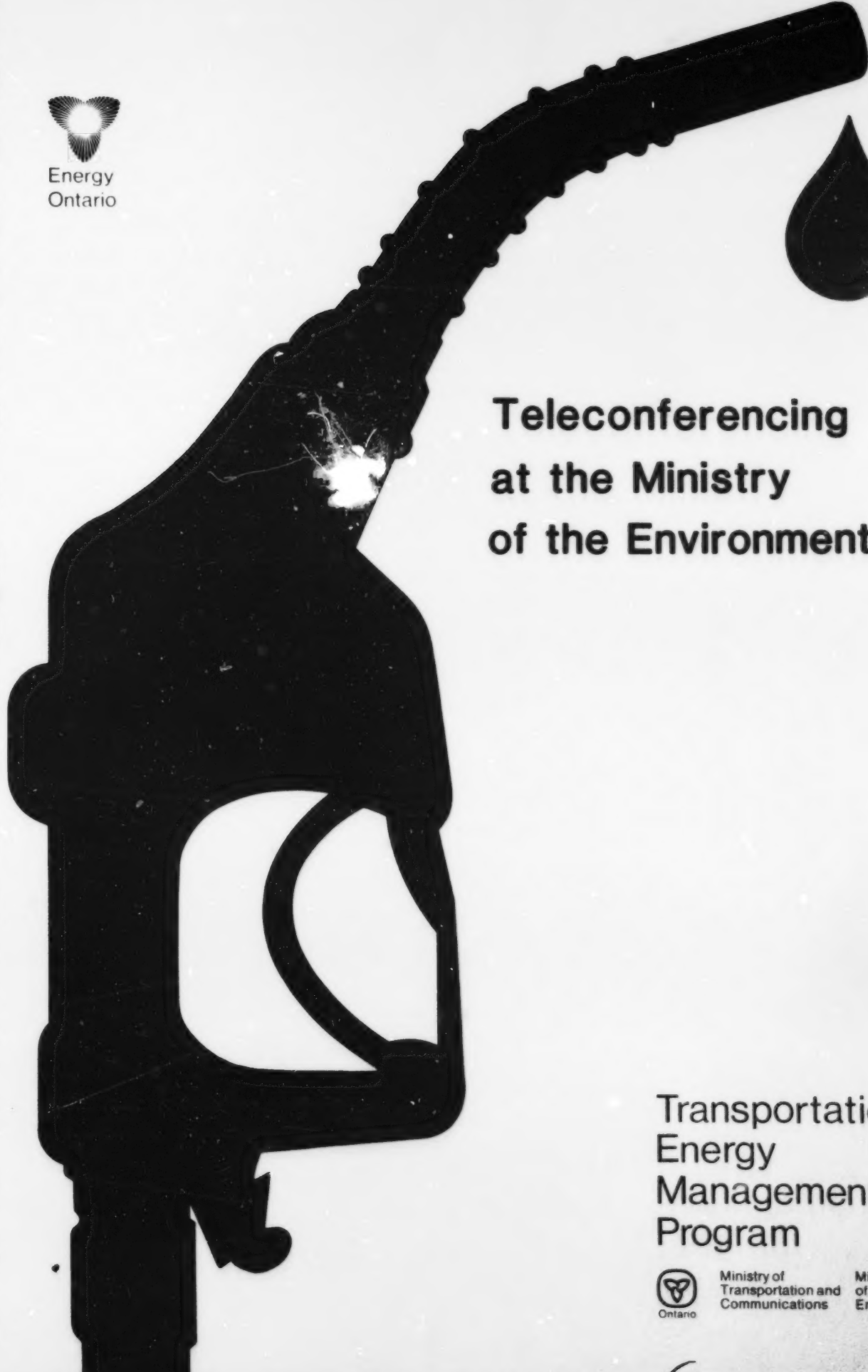




Energy
Ontario



Teleconferencing at the Ministry of the Environment

Transportation
Energy
Management
Program



Ontario

Ministry of
Transportation and
Communications

Ministry
of
Energy

Teleconferencing at the Ministry of the Environment

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Hon. Philip Andrewes, Minister
Duncan Allan, Deputy Minister

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For additional copies write:

TEMP Teleconferencing Task Force
East Building
Ministry of Transportation and Communications
1201 Wilson Avenue
Downsview, Ontario
Canada M3M 1J8

March 1984

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1. Introduction

The following report summarizes the teleconferencing activities within the Ministry of the Environment between October 1980 and December 1983. It also includes the results of a survey of the Ministry's teleconferencing users conducted by the TEMP Teleconferencing Task Force in August, 1983.

2. Background

The Ministry of the Environment has as its mandate:

to achieve and maintain a quality of the environment, including air, water and land, that will protect human health and the ecosystem and will contribute to the well-being of the people of Ontario.

It is a large and complex organization with over 2000 employees located in the head office (135 St. Clair West in Toronto), six regional offices (Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Kingston, Don Mills, London and Hamilton) and over 25 district offices in Toronto and across the province. The nature of the Ministry's work results in a great deal of travel for staff, and emergency meetings are frequent. In order to fulfill its mandate effectively, the Ministry requires frequent contact amongst its staff in the various regions. It was this need to increase contact that prompted the Ministry to consider teleconferencing as one possible solution to the problem. Teleconferencing would provide a means to increase communication between Toronto and the six regional offices and help to reduce travel and travel costs.

The effectiveness of teleconferencing had been demonstrated within the Ontario government by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications' successful audio teleconferencing system. In 1980, a Teleconferencing Task Force, comprising the Ministries of Transportation and Communications, Energy and Government Services, was established as part

of Ontario's Transportation Energy Management Program (TEMP), to promote the use of audio teleconferencing within the Ontario government. The Task Force assisted the Ministry of the Environment in establishing a teleconferencing program in 1980. Teleconferencing equipment was installed in the head and regional offices and fully operational by October 1980. Although the equipment was bought and administered by the Regional Operations and Laboratories Division, it was to be used by the entire Ministry.

3. System Design and Implementation

The system chosen was the CNCP Broadband, a four-wire switched data network. The head office boardroom (15th floor, 135 St. Clair West) was equipped with one chairman's microphone/speaker unit, one passive unit (speaker with no microphone) and four delegates' units. (The system is now in an eighth floor boardroom). Each regional office was equipped with one chairman's unit, one passive unit and two delegates' units. The network has been set up so that a single phone number plus one of a number of pre-set suffixes will automatically connect a designated combination of locations on the network. Other locations within other Ministries having similar facilities (MTC, MNA, MGS) may be added by the CNCP operator.

A Conference 2000 unit, a large portable speakerphone intended for use in a boardroom with up to fifteen (15) participants, was also purchased for the head office. Speakerphones can be used for teleconferencing with small groups. Both Conference 2000 units and speakerphones are used to accommodate groups of participants in any one location on a teleconference using the regular telephone network.

Prior to 1983, if more than two locations wished to participate, a teleconference had to be arranged through the Bell Conference Operator. Early in 1983, a new government teleconference bridge was installed in the government switchboard at Queen's Park. Multi-point teleconferences can now be established which take advantage of the low cost of government tie-lines (Inter-City Network) and minimal bridging charges.

An important aspect of the assistance provided by the Task Force was in the area of promotion and training. Pamphlets introducing the concept and its benefits and outlining the procedures for arranging and handling a teleconference were produced. A teleconferencing coordinator was appointed in Toronto and in each regional office to take on the responsibility of booking teleconferences, setting up the equipment, attending the start of a session to ensure that proper call-up and documentation procedures are followed and to provide any assistance required. A Coordinator's Handbook, with instructions on the operation of the equipment, and an Implementation Guide were prepared and distributed in October 1980. Training sessions were conducted by the Task Force for all coordinators and potential teleconferencers. In addition, evaluation procedures were established.

4. Evaluation

After each teleconference, users complete an evaluation form (see appendix). Since October 1980, these forms have been collected and copies forwarded to the TEMP Teleconferencing Task Force to be analyzed. The information from these forms is summarized below.

Teleconferencing Use

Number of Teleconferences:

<u>Oct. 31/1980 - Dec. 31/1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>Total*</u>
103	86	92	281

Direct Travel Substitution:

45 (44%)	37 (43%)	47 (51%)	129 (46%)
----------	----------	----------	-----------

Estimated Savings

Travel Costs	\$20,100.00	\$11,500.00	\$23,400.00	\$55,000.00
Hours	870.0	330.0	1,012.0	2,212.0
Value of time @ \$20.00 per hr.	\$ 17,400.00	\$ 6,600.00	\$20,240.00	\$44,240.00
** Potential Fuel	5,400.0L	1,575.0L	5,500.0L	12,475.0L

* Other teleconferences, especially those using office speakerphones, may have occurred without evaluation. The data, therefore, represents primarily the use of the CNCP Dedicated Network. Travel costs include \$15 per day food allowance but do not include accommodation.

** The figures for potential fuel savings are given for road travel only. Many of the teleconferences also represent significant replacement for air travel. Although no fuel savings can be estimated for an individual trip replaced by teleconferencing, an accumulation of trips not taken does reach a point where a significant savings in fuel consumption can be said to occur.

Number of locations

	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
8	1 (1%)		
7	44 (43%)	38 (44%)	40 (44%)
6	22 (21%)	10 (12%)	14 (15%)
5	7 (7%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
4	4 (4%)	4 (4%)	3 (3%)
3	5 (5%)	4 (5%)	7 (8%)
2	20 (19%)	29 (34%)	26 (28%)

Number of Participants

	<u>1980-81</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
3 - 5	13 (12.5%)	14 (16.3%)	13 (14%)
6 - 9	34 (33%)	21 (24.3%)	34 (37%)
10 - 19	47 (45.5)	30 (35%)	31 (34%)
20 +	9 (9%)	21 (24.3%)	14 (15%)

Duration

1 hr.	23 (22%)	22 (26%)	49 (53%)
1+ - 2	50 (49%)	39 (45%)	30 (33%)
2+ - 3	26 (25%)	21 (24%)	10 (11%)
3+	4 (4%)	4 (5%)	3 (3%)

5. The Survey

5.1 Rationale and Methodology

In order to gain information on users' experience with teleconferencing and their opinions as to the advantages and disadvantages of the medium, its areas of efficiency and its limitations, a survey of teleconferencing users within the Ministry of the Environment was undertaken by the TEMP Teleconferencing Task Force in June, 1983. The list of teleconferencing users was compiled from the names on teleconferencing evaluation sheets sent to the Task Force from the Ministry of the Environment teleconferencing coordinator. Since there are teleconferences which take place without being evaluated and since not all of the 1983 evaluation forms had been received when the mailing list was compiled, it was not possible to include on the list the names of all persons (within the Ministry) who had teleconferenced.

To complicate matters, many users have since left the Ministry or changed jobs and could not be located. However, 154 surveys were sent directly to persons listed on the evaluation forms as having participated in one or more teleconferences since October 1980. A separate letter was sent to the regional coordinators outlining the survey and study, along with the names of 47 other users whose addresses could not be located and extra copies of the survey for distribution wherever possible. The names of 58 other Toronto users were checked with the central coordinator but no surveys were sent for lack of available addresses.

Realizing that many people were on holidays when the survey was sent, non-respondents were contacted by telephone in order to ensure a reasonably high response rate.

5.2 Responses

Of the 154 surveys sent directly, 88 were received; of the 47 possibly distributed regionally, 10 were received; 98 of a possible 201.

The survey is reproduced in the appendix. Each individual question is given followed by a distribution of the 98 responses received. Wherever no answer was given, a column for "unspecified" has been added for purposes of tabulation. In some cases, respondents themselves have created additional columns which have been noted.

5.3 Summary of the Survey Results

5.3.1 Use and Awareness of the Available Systems

Since the CNCP Dedicated Network is the primary system installed in the MOE, it was expected that most teleconferencers would have used it. Although 78 of the respondents had used the CNCP Dedicated Network, 47 had used it only 1-10 times since 1980. Speakerphones had been used by 36 respondents and five of these had used them more than 25 times. Only six had used the Conference 2000, nine the Bell Conference Service with a desk phone, one the add-on feature and one the new government bridge. Users of these last four systems reported using them for less than a dozen meetings. One half of the users indicated that they possessed enough knowledge to arrange a teleconference using the CNCP Dedicated Network. Only 40 felt they could arrange a teleconference by speakerphone and 15 by using the Conference 2000 unit. In these latter two cases, the limited availability of the equipment is probably a major contributing factor to the lack of knowledge. With the CNCP dedicated facilities, many users indicated that they are not in a position to arrange meetings, only to participate in them, and as such may feel no need to know how to arrange a teleconference. The small number of users (10) acquainted with the operation of the new government teleconference bridge would suggest that more information and promotion of this service

should be provided especially since 32 claimed to know how to arrange a conference through Bell Canada's Conference Operator. The government bridge provides a similar service at a much reduced rate since the Inter-City Network can be used. It also makes teleconferencing possible in offices where the dedicated facilities are not available.

Although not more than half of the users indicated that they knew how to arrange a teleconference using the available facilities, 87 claimed to know the person to contact for teleconferencing assistance or information. Users were almost equally divided between those who had arranged a teleconference (52) and those who had not (46). Of those that gave reasons for not arranging a teleconference almost 90 indicated either that they do not initiate meetings or that someone else arranges the teleconference.

5.3.2 Teleconferences vs. Face-to-Face Meetings

The question indicating the percentage of meetings for which teleconferencing could be substituted revealed significant information only in the answers on Head Office-Regions meetings. Between 77-80 claimed to attend no meetings between locations listed in the other categories (Head Office -Districts, Regions-Regions, Regions-Districts, other), left the question unspecified or indicated that no meetings between these points could be teleconferenced.

For Head Office-Regions meetings, 41 felt that between 20% and 50% of their meetings could be substituted, and 9 felt that for more than 50% of meetings teleconferencing would be a viable alternative. In an average year, only 22 are involved in more than 20 meetings (roughly two per month or more) involving travel for someone between head and regional offices. When asked to indicate the number of teleconferences they expected to be involved in within the year, 9 indicated 30-50 (three to four per month) and 8 noted 51 or more (more than one a week); a full 50 indicated less than 10, 8 indicated zero; and 9 didn't know. Therefore,

a majority (67) expect teleconferencing to play only a marginal role in their meeting activities in the coming year. At the same time, 47 felt that they could use teleconferencing more often. Improvements in the equipment were cited by 37 users as means to encourage use; 10 felt more detailed instruction/information would help; 26 cited other factors such as availability of equipment, more desire by others to do so, better agenda preparation and cutbacks in the travel budget.

5.3.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Teleconferencing

The most frequently cited advantage of teleconferencing was the elimination of travel for some participants (90). Half of the respondents also indicated that teleconferencing made it possible to have more staff attend meetings (49) and meetings took less time or were more efficient (47). One-third felt that it reduces the number of phone calls (35) or that decisions were reached more rapidly.

The most commonly mentioned disadvantage of teleconferencing is the loss of personal contact (76); close to one half of the users also cited equipment or transmission problems (41). Smaller numbers of respondents also felt that teleconferenced meetings are more tiring than face-to-face meetings (16), require more preparation (18) or require more meetings to complete business (10).

There was not, however, any consensus as to the most appealing features of teleconferencing: 27 cited time savings; 21 -- cost reduction or more effective use of funds; 20 -- shorter or more efficient meetings; 16 -- travel reduction. Various other aspects of teleconferencing were mentioned by the respondents: inclusion of all necessary people (12); fast arrangement of meetings (11); improved communications (8); information spread more quickly (7).

Overall as a means of conducting business, 55 were very or completely satisfied, and 39 were somewhat satisfied. Only 2 expressed dissatisfaction. Lack of total satisfaction was due to loss of personal contact and/or travel (8), lack of visual capacity (5), lack of organization or planning (3), lack of familiarity with the equipment or procedures (3), and an inappropriate use of teleconferencing for some types of meetings (5).

Satisfaction with equipment brought similar answers: 50 were very or completely satisfied, 39 somewhat satisfied; 3 somewhat dissatisfied; however, another 2 were very dissatisfied. Transmission quality fared less well: only 39 were very or completely satisfied; 44 somewhat satisfied; 10 somewhat dissatisfied; 1 very dissatisfied. It appears that users found themselves slightly less satisfied with the teleconferencing equipment than with teleconferencing as a means of doing business. Improvements in the quality of equipment and transmission should improve the overall satisfaction with teleconferencing.

5.3.4 Meetings/Applications for which Teleconferencing is or is not suitable

Instances of specific successful meetings which users mentioned are given in the appendix. In general terms, the meetings which were seen to be most successful for teleconferencing were those involving information exchange; progress reports/updates or reviews of policy proposals; planning projects or programs; drafting resolutions; problem solving; emergencies or decisions requiring an immediate consensus; follow-ups to regular meetings; business requiring the presence of all personnel or international parties.

The unsuitability of some meetings for teleconferencing may be a result of either the formal aspects involved or the nature of the business itself. Meetings which include detailed discussions of technical issues or those involving tables, charts, engineering plans or calculations were seen as unsuitable, as were very long meetings or those requiring full participation of a large number of people. Intense negotiations, first acquaintances, or personnel discussions are also seen as difficult to teleconference.

Some users also commented on a number of factors which can cause a teleconference to be unsuccessful: material not supplied in advance, meeting badly organized and/or controlled, discussion dominated by one-to-one conversations, equipment problems.

6. Conclusion

The teleconferencing systems within the Ministry of the Environment have been used by over two hundred different persons in the past three years. Meeting sizes have ranged from three or four persons in a two point call to over 30 involved in a seven region conference. Since over 70% of the meetings are shorter than two hours, less time is spent meeting than would typically be spent travelling to the meeting site. Although savings in time and travel have been significant, the opportunity for improved or increased communication may be seen as an equally important function of teleconferencing. Teleconferencing has allowed divisional directors, regional managers and others to hold committee meetings or exchange information on a regular basis. It has also been used for handling emergencies, for discussion and decisions concerning specific projects, or on occasions when travel was impossible or undesirable. Although problems have occurred from time to time, most users are satisfied with the systems and with teleconferencing as a way of doing business. Many meetings will, of necessity, continue to be conducted face-to-face; nonetheless, the Ministry of the Environment has shown that teleconferencing can be used effectively, on many occasions, to reduce travel and to improve communication within an organization with widely scattered personnel.

APPENDIX

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

TELECONFERENCING

NAME _____ OFFICE _____

Teleconferencing is defined as any situation where three or more individuals communicate simultaneously, as a group, over an electrical telecommunications channel.

Question #1

At this moment do you feel you have enough knowledge to arrange a teleconference utilizing the following teleconferencing equipment/services? Please check.

	CNCP			Government	Bell
	Dedicated	Speaker-	Conference	Teleconference	Conference
	Network	phone	2000	Bridge	Operator
a) Yes, no problem at all	29	23	5	3	16
b) Yes, with some instruction	20	17	10	7	16
c) No, would re- quire more in- formation	32	25	33	37	29
d) No, not at all	15	18	33	33	21
e) Unspecified	2	15	17	18	16

Question #2

Within your Ministry do you know the person to contact about arranging a teleconference or obtaining information on teleconferencing?

YES	87
NO	11

Question #3

In an average year how many meetings do you attend where travel is involved for any of the participants at the meeting?

Number of Meetings

Head Office-Regions	_____
Head Office-Districts	_____
Regions-Regions	_____
Regions-Districts	_____
Other	_____

NUMBER OF MEETINGS

Offices	None	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	50	Unspecified
Head Office-Regions	12	37	21	12	5	3	2	6
Head Office-Districts	62	23	5	1	1	0	0	6
Regions-Regions	54	36	1	0	0	1	0	6
Regions-Districts	54	25	6	6	1	0	0	6
Other	54	22	6	3	3	0	2	8

Question #4

How many of these meetings could be substituted for by teleconferencing?

	<u>Number of Meetings</u>
Head Office-Regions	_____
Head Office-Districts	_____
Regions-Regions	_____
Regions-Districts	_____
Others	_____

In order to present the data in a uniform manner, the figures given in this question were cross-checked with question #3 and converted into percentages. Some respondents themselves replied in percentages rather than figures.

% OF MEETINGS

Offices	Attended no	Zero	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-100	Un-
	meetings in								specified
	this category								
Head Office-									
Regions	12	15	3	3	12	12	17	9	15
Head Office-									
Districts	61	7	2	1	3	5	7	2	10
Regions -									
Regions	53	15	0	4	2	1	6	8	9
Regions -									
Districts	55	15	0	2	3	3	5	5	10
Other	52	15	1	3	4	3	7	2	11

Question #5

How many teleconferencing meetings do you feel you will be involved in, in the next year? _____

Unspecified/ Don't know	None	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-100
----------------------------	------	------	-------	-------	-------	-------	--------

9	8	50	14	0	3	6	8
---	---	----	----	---	---	---	---

Question #6

Have you ever <u>arranged</u> a teleconference?	1. YES	52
	2. NO	46

if no, why not _____

	# of respondents
"Others have always done it/personnel are designated for it".	12
"Never had a reason/opportunity to arrange it" (some added: "with my type of work").	8
"Usually arranged by Head Office".	5
"I respond/participate, but do not initiate meetings"	5
Other: "Business can be handled on a regular telephone agenda"/"Resistance to change, not thinking about it soon enough".	2
No reason given.	<u>14</u>
TOTAL	46

The respondents' comments to this question indicated that the word "arranged" had been variously interpreted. Some took "arrange" to mean the decision to teleconference and the contacting of appropriate personnel to set up and run the equipment. Others assumed that "arranging" a teleconference must include the operation of the equipment.

Question #7

Could you use teleconferencing more often? NO 44 MAYBE 5
YES 47 NO ANSWER 2

If YES, what would encourage you to do so?

- 1 Did not specify
- 10 More information, detailed instruction.
- 19 Greater accessibility to equipment.
- 8 Higher transmission quality.
- 10 Greater equipment capabilities.

Specify _____

26 Other: _____

Specify _____

Greater equipment capabilities: Four of the respondents did not specify. Of the remaining, two suggested visual aids; three mentioned what could be classified as accessibility to equipment: i.e., no linkage with district offices and head office staff have less access to equipment than do regional staff. One respondent indicated the annoyance of breaks in the connection and one cited the inherent conflict of having the teleconferencing equipment in the main conference room.

Other: Based on a reading of these comments, a new category could be created to the effect of: "Greater staff familiarity with teleconferencing applicability and use." Ten respondents made comments of this nature. Many pointed out that they had difficulty convincing others of the effectiveness of teleconferencing or even of its presence, or they indicated a lack of familiarity with the equipment. Some suggested that it should be promoted to staff, using reminders, in order to make its use habitual. One respondent thought that the problem lay in the lack of desire of other branches to share information; another few respondents stressed that in their jobs personal contact was necessary and could not be substituted or that a teleconference could only be initiated by the other party. Other points that were cited as factors that would influence the respondent's use of teleconferencing were: the availability of time and equipment at certain offices, better agenda preparation, and drastic cutbacks in the travel budget.

Question #8

What is your job title?

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Executive Director | 1 |
| 2. Director, Assistant Director | 7 |
| 3. Manager | 20 |
| 4. Coordinator, Administrator | 6 |
| 5. Head, Supervisor | 29 |
| 6. Chief | 6 |
| 7. Other (Analysts, Engineers, Clerks, Secretaries
Advisors, etc.) | 29 |

Question #9

Would you like more information on teleconferencing?

- | | |
|--------|----|
| 1. YES | 34 |
| 2. NO | 64 |

Question #10

Since October 1980, which of the following teleconferencing systems have you used?

Please Check # of Times

Dedicated Network
Speakerphone
Conference 2000
Government Teleconference Bridge
Desk phone with Bell Conference
Service

None 1-10 11-25 26-50 51-75 76-100 101-150 150+ unspecified

	None	1-10	11-25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-150	150+	unspecified
Dedicated Network	7	47	8	11	4	3	4	1	13
Speakerphone	62	22	6	1	0	1	2	2	2
Conference 2000	91	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Government Tele- conference Bridge	97	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Desk phone with Bell Conference Service	88	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other (add-on)	96	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

Question #11

- (a) In general, for the teleconferencing meetings you attended, what were the advantages of teleconferencing (please check or make comment).

		somewhat/ perhaps
- did not specify	1	
- reduces number of phone calls	35	1
- eliminated travel for some participants	90	
- able to have more staff attend meeting	49	2
- reached a decision or consensus more rapidly	27	5
- meetings took less time/streamlined/efficient	47	1
- other (specify)	8	

A number of respondents indicated a cautious "perhaps", "maybe" or "somewhat" next to some of the answers. We have chosen to keep these separate and have therefore left them in a qualified category which did not actually appear on the original survey. Of those that indicated "other", many stressed the time saved as a result of travel reduction. Others pointed out the reduced costs. A few suggested that the expediency of teleconferencing was a definite advantage: a meeting could be arranged to deal with urgent matters immediately and include all of the necessary people. One respondent noted that teleconferences were not easily dominated or manipulated by individuals and another noted the benefits of teleconferencing for efficient dissemination of information and instructions.

(b) In general, what were the disadvantages of teleconferencing?

		somewhat/ perhaps
- no disadvantages	6	
- increases number of phone calls	4	
- loss of personal contact	76	1
- reduces personal travel (enjoy travelling to meetings)	4	1
- more tiring than face-to-face meetings	16	1
- meetings require more preparation	18	1
- equipment/transmission problems	41	2
- required more meetings to complete business	10	1
- other	13	

There were more answers in the "other" category for this question than for #11a, and they were more varied. Several respondents mentioned the limitation of being unable to exchange visual information, and the often resulting confusion; two others stressed the importance of "body language". Another factor that many mentioned referred to the quality of the discussion. Several noted that, via teleconferencing, discussions were limited, with no beneficial side conversations; and agreements and decisions were more difficult to attain, sometimes resulting in confusion or lack of understanding. One respondent claimed that updating and transmission of data developed too slowly, and another stressed the limitations of using teleconferencing for larger projects that may involve the visitation of sites, for instance. Other aspects of teleconferencing which were noted as disadvantages by respondents were: the large number of procedures necessary in arranging a teleconference; the lack of experience on the part of some users; the monopolization of meetings by a few individuals; and the tendency of participants to be less prepared for meetings (and thus necessitating further meetings). One individual believed teleconferenced meetings resulted in lost man-hours: meetings lasted the scheduled amount of time even if the necessary business had been completed. He also believed that individuals were present who did not really need to be there.

Question #12

Overall, what features of teleconferencing did you find most appealing, i.e. what features would you highlight in trying to get someone else to use the system?

Comment _____

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. No comment | 12 |
| 2. Travel Reduction | 16 |
| 3. Time Savings | 27 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- more efficient use of time- reduces jet lag- time efficient way of obtaining a variety of opinions or of disseminating information | |
| 4. Money Savings | 21 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- cost reduction- more cost effective for some meetings- travel dollars more effectively used | |
| 5. Shorter and/or more efficient meetings | 20 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- business is finished more quickly using the telephone | |
| <p>One participant added "if prepared" and another cautioned that although teleconferenced meetings are generally shorter and more efficient they "can be a waste of time if agenda topics are not communicated sufficiently in advance." One commented that the speakerphone allows for more efficient use of the office phone.</p> | |
| 6. All necessary people attend the meeting | 12 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- easier to get people to attend since travel is not involved- guest speakers can address the group | |

Some stressed the immediacy of getting everyone together but one also mentioned a drawback when meetings are called on short notice: the absence of a good agenda and support documentation.

7. Expediency/meetings can be arranged quickly 11

- Some said that this was a great asset if participants are familiar with the system and prepared. One commented "We were able to meet deadlines in crisis situations".

8. More frequent interaction/improved communication 8

- A number specifically cited head to regional offices.

9. Decisions reached/information spread more quickly 7

- Some mentioned in particular the reduction in the number of phone calls needed to reach an agreement, but one pointed out that sometimes there may be no economic advantage.

10. More people can be involved 4

11. Convenient/easy to use 2

12. Availability of files, resources 1

Other Comments

"You're not as overpowered by any one person either by his actions or his position."

"Very informal attitude."

"No official innuendos."

"Meetings are better planned."/ "Requires preparation and organization."

"Covers a great variety of topics."

"Each person has his or her say and those people who can't benefit by what is being said can discuss something else or work on something else without distracting interested parties."

"The system is good for giving out information and giving out instructions on priority tasks, both where limited discussion is required. It is good to obtain a quick consensus of the participants, but not good for detailed discussion of a specific technical issue."

"One user commented that it is important to get as many people as possible to use the system once. Most people don't think of initiating a teleconference simply because they aren't familiar or comfortable with it."

"Very good in replacing meetings that have only a few subjects to cover."

"I find teleconferencing fits a specific need; it is excellent for monitoring and for discussions of progress and problems on specific programs."

Question #13

In general, how satisfied are you with teleconferencing as a means of conducting business?

- | | |
|----------------------------|----|
| 1. Completely satisfied | 5 |
| 2. Very satisfied | 50 |
| 3. Somewhat satisfied | 39 |
| 4. Somewhat dissatisfied | 2 |
| 5. Very dissatisfied | |
| 6. Completely dissatisfied | |
| 7. Did not specify | 2 |

Comment: _____

No Comment 69

Several reasons were given for lack of total satisfaction.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Loss of personal contact and/or travel to the field | 8 |
| - interaction is lost when you can't see the reaction of other participants | |
| - cannot pick up on body language, tacit agreement | |
| - personal contact needed to build trust with new people or in negotiation | |
| - difficult to assess tone of meeting and whether the business conducted was really concluded satisfactorily and whether all were involved | |
| - problems in communication can arise in highly technical and detailed discussions when face-to-face contact is lost. | |
| 2. Lack of visual capabilities | 5 |
| 3. Lack of organization, planning or chairman control | 3 |
| 4. Lack of familiarity with equipment or teleconferencing procedures | 3 |
| - needs to be encouraged more | |
| - need more opportunities for use | |
| 5. Not good for certain types of meetings | 5 |
| - another form of communication may be more effective | |
| 6. Limited accessibility | 2 |

Question #14

In general, how satisfied are you with the equipment and transmission?

	<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Transmission</u>
1. Completely satisfied	6	6
2. Very satisfied	44	33
3. Somewhat satisfied	39	44
4. Somewhat dissatisfied	3	10
5. Very dissatisfied	2	1
6. Completely dissatisfied	0	0
7. Did not specify	4	4

Comment: _____

No comment 69

The reasons for lack of complete satisfaction were given as follows:

1. Noise: feedback, static, hum, echo 8
2. Disconnections, drop-offs during meeting 5
3. Difficulty in connecting all parties (time-wasted) 5
4. Loss of volume
5. Transmission problems (unspecified) 6
 - one user commented that "transmission problem may be due to improper use of equipment."
 - occasional 'tunnel' feeling
6. Equipment is not portable; bulky cords are a nuisance 6
 - microphone units are easily disconnected
 - no automatic dial-up
 - lack of familiarity and ease with the equipment

One user commented that he/she was "very satisfied considering we are using a voice-only system."

Question #15

Please comment on any specific applications of teleconferencing which, from your experience, have been successful.

Responses: 41

Specific meetings cited

Regular meetings:

Weekly ADM's meeting/weekly regional directors' meetings/head to regional offices

- particularly when meetings would not otherwise exist
- Women's Advisory Committee meetings - Head Office to Regions
- Regional Systems Coordinators
- NWR staff and Kenora district staff
- Discussions regarding acquisition of regional computer hardware

Ontario/Canada Task Force Report on Inco and Falconbridge

Press briefing: Toronto-Sudbury

Task Force working meetings

Development of an agenda for a conference involving all MOE regions

Strategy meetings for MOE staff involved in Interministerial Committee having very short deadlines

Emergency situations such as a stop payment process when legislature does not pass appropriation and the time limit for provisional expenditure has expired

Meeting with client and his employees re: plant operations

Monitoring Container Program

Types of meetings

Progress reports and updates where individual inputs are specific

Reports where comments are required within a short period of time

Meetings called to update all participants on the latest developments, to ask for information from participants (progress reports, problems encountered) when all participants can compare these problems and progressions to their own

Review of comments on policy proposals

Discuss draft regulation

Problem solving when different MOE branches are involved in one project

- One user commented that it is "less successful than transfer of information."

Emergency meetings

- "It is a most suitable vehicle for addressing an urgent corporate need affecting a number of regions."

Information transfer

- from head office to regional groups or senior management
- giving out instructions on priority tasks where limited discussion is required
- communications with field staff
- uniform dissemination of information when all parties are prepared

Planning research projects or field programs with regions

Internationally-linked meetings involving consultants from the states and sometimes Europe

Resolving outstanding items requiring follow-up action from regular meetings

Discussions of a pre-determined specific agenda dealing with matters affecting many individuals

Meetings where it is advantageous to make decisions, convey information or take a consensus without delay

Meetings where it is necessary to have all personnel present

Comments on how meetings have been affected by teleconferencing

"Our monthly meetings are now more organized and shorter; you are also available in your own office if emergencies come up."

"Teleconferences which have had extensive preparation and correspondence before hand allow quick and informed decisions to be made. The subject matter of a teleconference is not as important in determining success as is preparation."

"Teleconferencing is a useful additional tool that can be applied to certain situations where previously meetings or lengthy phone calls would have been required, but it does not replace the need for conventional meetings in other situations.

"Teleconferencing enables a meeting to occur where it would be uneconomical to institute a regular meeting."

Special application of the equipment

The dedicated system and speakerphone can be used together when it is necessary to bring in personnel not on the dedicated system. However, participants must be prepared to make special considerations.

Question #16

Please comment on any specific applications of teleconferencing which, from your experience, have not been successful.

Responses: 32

Specific types of meetings cited as not suitable

Those which involve tables, charts, engineering plans, drawings, diagrams

Those involving intense negotiations and agreements

- One user commented that teleconferencing is "not very successful in 'setting' an idea to which there is wide resistance. Teleconferencing gives callers a chance to 'gang up'."

Detailed discussions of a specific technical issue

Meetings involving staff relations

Very long meetings

Meetings where large numbers are involved and full participation is desired

Quarterly Managers' meetings

Meeting individuals for the first time

- One user commented that when you are "assessing new products and equipment [teleconferencing] does nothing to establish personal rapport with business associates. Many problems get solved over lunch (or at the bar). Many discussions require privacy not allowed for in group eavesdropping systems."

Discussions involving complex material which may contain calculations, sketches, etc. and require sub-conversations for explanations, particularly if people from widely varying backgrounds are attending (eg. engineers, specialists, administrators, etc.).

Problems which create unsuccessful teleconferencing

Necessary material has not been supplied in advance

Meeting turns into a one-to-one conversation for most of the time

The agenda is too broad/the meeting is poorly organized

The chairman does not take charge to keep people to the point, prevent rambling etc.

- some meetings may be harder to control via teleconferencing
- chairman needs to exercise judgement to terminate when business concludes

Equipment or transmission problems

- some participants not familiar with the equipment

Meetings where "only a number of people can be reached by teleconferencing while others still have to travel to regional centers for use of the equipment".



Ministry
of the
Environment

FINAL DATE: _____

TIME: _____

TELECONFERENCE: DATA SHEET

Requested by: _____

Purpose : _____

Duration of teleconference: _____

Total number of participants in all locations: _____

Would the participants have had to travel if teleconferencing had not
been available: Yes ____ No ____

Available Dates/Times:

1. _____ A.M. ____ P.M. ____

2. _____ A.M. ____ P.M. ____

3. _____ A.M. ____ P.M. ____

Persons/Offices Required:

Toronto : _____

London : _____

Hamilton : _____

Don Mills : _____

Kingston : _____

Sudbury : _____

Thunder Bay : _____

P.T.O.

Comments:

Problems encountered while using system:

Problem

Location

Feedback :

Voice break-up :

Very low voice :

Very loud voice:

Other :

* * * *

Coordinator Name:

Telephone Number:

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL